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## AN ILLINOIS POET, ELIJAH WHITTIER BLAISDELL.

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E. W. Blaisdell, author of the poem "Rock River," was born at Montpelier, Vermont, July 18, 1826. His father was a printer and editor of the Vergennes *Vermont*, founded by Rufus W. Griswold, author of "Poets and Poetry of America." E. W. Blaisdell succeeded his father as editor of the "Vermont" and while editor of that paper was appointed postmaster of Vergennes. He came west to Stephenson county, Illinois, in the autumn of 1853 and removed to Rockford in January, 1854, when he purchased the "Rockford Forum," which he and his brother Richard published until 1862, when he sold the paper and it was merged into the "Register." He was one of the band who met in Bloomington May 29, 1856, and organized the Republican party of Illinois. It is claimed that the "Forum," under Blaisdell was the first newspaper to hoist the name of Lincoln for president. After selling the "Forum" he engaged in the practice of law and the sale of real estate. In 1858 he was elected a member of the Illinois legislature, lower house, where he voted for Lincoln for United States Senator against Stephen A. Douglas, a native of his own state.

After retirement from active business, he gave his time to literary pursuits. Some of his productions are: "The Hidden Record," a novel; "The Rajah," a political burlesque; a drama, "Eve, the General's Daughter"; founded on incidents in the Black Hawk War. He is also the author of a volume of miscellaneous poems of some 300 pages, which were published some ten years

ago. I first saw the poem, "Rock River," in 1873, when I copied it into the Polo Press and I presume it may have been written about that time.

J. W. CLINTON.

### ROCK RIVER.

Let Erin's bards, in sweetest strains,  
The praise of "Shannon" sound;  
Let "Ayr" and "Clyde" and "Bonnie Doon"  
Still ring the wide world round;  
For me I sing, with honest pride,  
A fairer stream than either—  
I sing the praise in humble lays,  
Of Sin-nis-sip-pi river.

Than thine O Sinnis-ippi fair,  
No crystal waves are sunnier;  
Than thine, sweet river of the West,  
No banks nor braes are bonnier;  
Along thy marge the prairie rose  
'Mid lily-blooms is blushing;  
While from thy nooks and shady groves  
The oriole's song is gushing.

Now mirrored on thy clear expanse,  
The summer clouds are sailing;  
Now, round thy graceful coves and curves,  
The sunset's fires are trailing;  
The wild duck's brood—a tiny fleet—  
Within the glow is riding  
And o'er thy wave the swift-winged gull  
With glittering crest is gliding.

Nor fairy realms, nor Switzer lakes,  
Nor locks of Scotia's Highlands,  
Embosom gems more queenly fair  
Than these, thine emerald islands;

Along thy steeps the woodbine creeps,  
The wild-grape proudly twining—  
The hues and dyes of Autumn skies  
Upon their leaflets shining.

The drooping elms thy shores above  
Lean lovingly above thee,  
While from their boughs the warblers tell  
How well and true they love thee;  
Then let my muse thy praises sound;  
Be mine the pleasant duty  
To sing—though artless be the strain—  
Thy weird and sylvan beauty.